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DC  
BATMAN

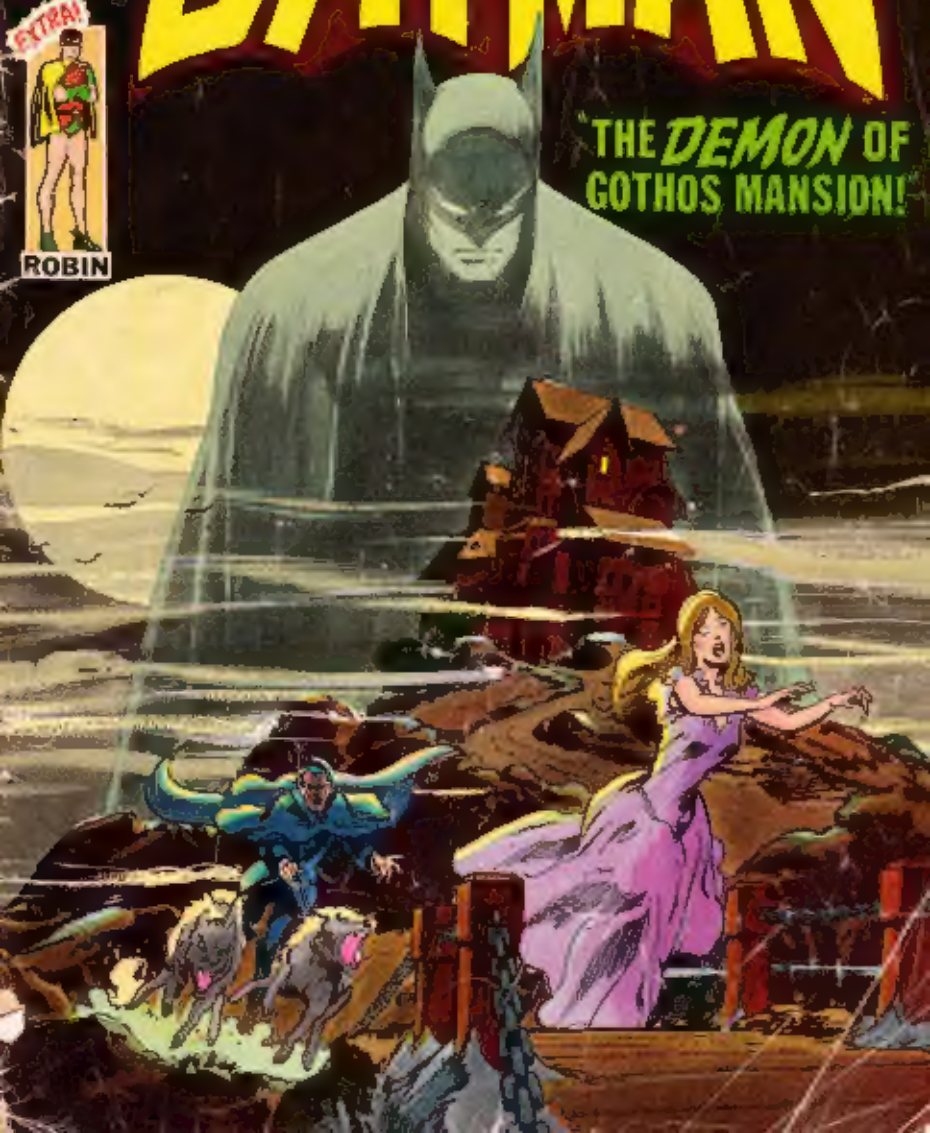


ROBIN

# BATMAN

APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
AUTHORITY  
NO. 227  
DEC.

THE *DEMON* OF  
GOTHOS MANSION!



IN ALL THIS BLEAK, CAVERNIOUS COUNTRY-  
SIDE THERE IS BUT A SINGLE GLEAM OF  
LIGHT--A YELLOWED LUMINESCENCE  
GLOWING IN A CRUMBING TOWER--

--AND THEREIN STANDS A  
LOVELY GIRL, TROUBLED,  
TERRIFIED--

--WHILE WITHOUT, AN EERIE  
FIGURE GLIDES OVER THE  
TANGLED GROUNDS AS SILENT  
AS A SHADOW ON SNOW.

NO NOISE, NO  
MORTAL SOUND  
BREAKS THE SHROUDED  
STILLNESS, SAVE THE  
SCRAPING TOGETHER  
OF SKELETAL LIMBS  
IN THE TOPS OF  
ANCIENT TREES...  
AND A DISTANT,  
ASCENDED HOWL  
THAT MAY BE AN  
ANIMAL PLEADING  
FOR THE MOON, OR  
MAY NOT!

Follow The **BATMAN** as he plunges  
into the maw  
of evil where  
lurks--

# The Demon of Gotham's Mansion!

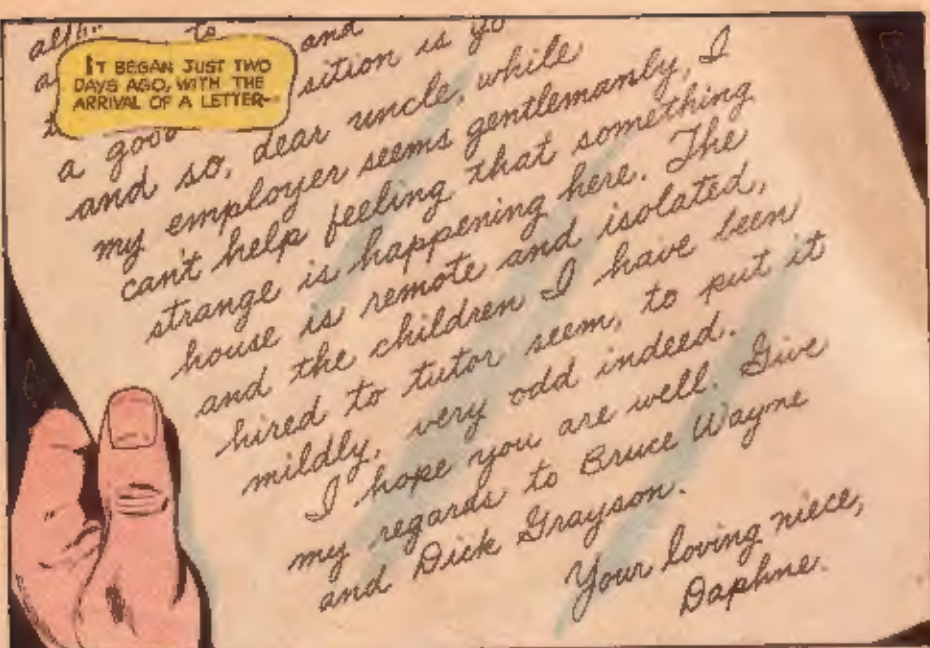
STORY: Denny O'Neil ART: Irv Novick and Dick Giordano

5-510

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THIS IT IS THAT THE **CAPED CRUSADER** STANDS ON A BARREN ESTATE IN THE MOUNTAINS A HUNDRED MILES FROM THE NEAREST TOWN--

THOSE FELLOWS APPEAR TO BE **GUARDS**! I COULD EVADE THEM--**EASILY!**

--BUT I'M CURIOUS...

...**WHY** WOULD ANYONE POST WATCH-MEN **HERE**? I'LL TEST THEIR **HOSTILITY**--BY **SHOWING MYSELF!**

GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN! BIT **HAPPY** FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR, ISN'T IT?

EH--? WHO BE THAT?

--'TIS A **GIANT BAT!**

NONSENSE YOU TALK, EPHRAIM! 'TIS NO MORE THAN A **MAN**! STRIKE A **FLAME**--WE'LL HAVE A **LOOK** AT HIM!

FEEL FREE! MIND TELLING ME THE NAME OF THIS PLACE?

**GOTNGS MANSION** AND WE'VE NO **LIKING** FOR **STRANGERS!**

WELL, NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN ME, I'LL BE **STROLLING ON!**

BUT NOT FAR--!

WHEN THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T LIKE **STRANGERS** THEY WEREN'T **KIDDING!**

FORTUNATELY, I WAS **PREPARED** FOR A **SNEAK ATTACK!**



FOR LONG YEARS, THIS **BATMAN** HAS TRAINED... AND OTHER MEN, ARMED THOUGH THEY BE, ARE NO MATCH FOR HIM...



SWIFTLY, NOISELESSLY, THE BATMAN  
CROSSES THE GROUNDS, AND...

SOMEONE'S  
COMING--! I MAY  
LEARN MORE  
UNSEEN...

WHEN WE POSITION  
THE ALTAR, ALL WILL  
BE IN READINESS,  
ELDER HEATHROW!

EXCELLENT, EXCELLENT!  
BE MERRY, FELLOWS OF  
THE COVEN OF GOTHOS  
MANSION--

--TONIGHT FOR THE  
FIRST TIME IN TWO  
CENTURIES, WE RAISE  
THE SPIRIT OF THE  
DEMON BALLK--

THE TRIO CONTINUES THROUGH  
THE UNDERBRUSH, LEAVING ONLY  
A FAINT SMELL OF MUSK IN  
THE CHILL NIGHT AIR --

DAPHNE HAS STUMBLED  
INTO TROUBLE -- THE  
WORST KIND! A  
COVEN IS A GROUP  
DEDICATED TO  
BLACK  
MAGIC--

--AND I RECALL  
THAT BALLK IS  
ONE OF THE  
NASTIEST CREATURES  
IN MYTHOLOGY!

ELDER HEATHROW  
IS APPARENTLY THE  
CHIEF WARLOCK--  
AND OBVIOUSLY MAD--

--WHICH DOESN'T  
MAKE HIM ANY  
LESS DANGEROUS!

THERE'S ONLY  
ONE WINDOW  
LIT IN THE  
HOUSE!



ALMOST AS THOUGH  
HE WERE WEIGHTLESS,  
THE BATMAN RISES  
UP THE SMOOTH,  
STONE TOWER...

SO THAT'S  
WHERE I  
BEGIN  
LOOKING  
FOR DAPHNE!

PLEASE... PLEASE,  
MISTER HEATHROW--  
LET ME OUT!

YOU HAVE  
NO CAUSE FOR  
FEAR, MISS  
PENNYWORTH!

THE--  
BATMAN--!!

I'VE COME  
TO TAKE YOU  
AWAY FROM  
HERE, DAPHNE!

THANK HEAVEN!--  
IT'S BEEN HORRID!  
THEY MADE ME WEAR  
THESE AWFUL, OLD  
CLOTHES... THEY'VE  
KEPT ME LOCKED  
UP...

...AND THE CHILDREN  
I WAS HIRED TO  
TEACH... I DISCOVERED  
THEY'RE NOT REALLY  
KIDS--THEY'RE A  
PAIR OF MIDEOUS  
DWARVES!

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

# THE WORLD'S FASTEST **BIG RACERS!**



WITH FANTASTIC

## GYRO-POWER

ONE QUICK FULL REVS  
POWER WHEEL UP TO 20,000 RPM  
AND...



### THEY'RE OFF!



**FAST!**

**400 SCALE MPH!**

**NO TRACK!**

**NO BATTERIES!**

**NO MOTOR! NO PUSH!**

BILLY'S SSP ELIMINATOR  
TAKES THE LEAD!



TOMMY'S SSP SIDEWINDER  
TOOK HWA ON THE JUMP!



THE SSP  
SKI-BALLER  
AND TEE-SHIFT  
ARE NECK  
AND NECK!



BOBBY'S SSP  
CAN-AM RACER  
NOSED OUT THE  
SIAMSE GLINGSHOT!



WHAT A RACE!  
WHAT A FINISH!



WHAT BIG  
RACING FUN!

**EXCLUSIVE!**  
**SELF-POWERED**  
**MOTORCYCLE**  
**RACERS!**



GET THE BIG SSP DRAG RACE SET UNLIMITED  
WITH 2 RACERS, 2 JUMP RAMPS, 2 LAUNCH PADS  
AND FLYING FINISH GATE WITH DRAG CHUTE.



**10 INDIVIDUAL RACERS**  
**COMPLETE WITH POWER T-STICK**  
**READY TO RACE!**



**KIDS! SEND TODAY FOR THE  
SSP THRILL-PAK!**


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Tool & Tire Threader for Faster Speed & Speed  
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A panel showing Batman and a woman with blonde hair wearing a pink dress. They are in a room with several framed paintings on the wall. Batman is looking at a painting of a woman, and the woman is also looking at it.

I'M SUPPOSED TO SPEND MY TIME LOOKING AT THESE OLD PAINTINGS!

THAT WOMAN... SHE LOOKS LIKE... AND IS DRESSED LIKE YOU! I WONDER HOW--?

A panel showing Batman jumping through a large, arched window. A woman in a pink dress is standing in the room, looking at him. There is a fire in the background.


WE'LL FIGURE IT OUT LATER AFTER I GET YOU TO SAFETY--!

THEY MAY HAVE SPOTTED MY ROPE, SO-- THIS LOCK IS OLD... RUSTY... SHOULDN'T BE TOO DIFFICULT TO BREAK!

A panel showing Batman and a woman in a pink dress. Batman is in the foreground, looking towards the woman. The woman is looking at him. There is a large sound effect 'VA-REENK!' in the background.

VA-REENK!

THERE--! I'LL GO FIRST! STAY A FEW FEET BEHIND ME... JUST IN CASE!

A panel showing Batman and a woman in a pink dress. Batman is in the foreground, looking towards the woman. The woman is looking at him.

NOBODY SEEMS TO BE IN THE HOUSE... THEY'RE PROBABLY ALL GETTING READY FOR THE FESTIVITIES--!

BUT... SUDDENLY... THE ANCIENT FLOOR GIVES WAY... AND BEFORE THE BATMAN CAN REACT, HE IS PLUMMETING DOWNWARD...





AHH... *THE BATMAN!* MY SENTRY'S WARNED ME YOU WERE ABOUT!

HOPELY DO NOT STRUGGLE! MY PISTOLS ARE AGED, BUT IN EXCELLENT CONDITION!

YOU SHALL DIE--EXQUISITELY!



TIMOS...CYMBEE... PREPARE OUR VISITOR FOR HIS FATE! BIND HIS HANDS--

AYE, ELDER! 'TIS DONE!



THEN...

I SHALL EXPLAIN! THIS DEVICE WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT BY MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDFATHER TO PUNISH DISOBEDIENT SERVANTS!

THE BLOCK UPON WHICH YOU STAND IS FIXED TO WEIGHTS UNDER THE FLOOR--



--CLEVERLY CONVEINED TO DROP SLOWLY INTO THE CELLAR!



IN A QUARTER OF AN HOUR OR SO, THE MOOSE AROUND YOUR NECK WILL BEAR YOUR FULL WEIGHT... HANGING YOU, OF COURSE!

WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, EXPLAIN *MORE!* WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH MISS PENNYWORTH?





FOR YEARS  
I SEARCHED  
FOR A MAIDEN  
BORN FREE. SE  
A MIDNIGHT  
ON OCTOBER 31ST  
A MINUTE  
EITHER WAY  
WOULD NOT  
HAVE  
SUFFICED!

FOR IF SUCH  
A ONE'S  
SACRIFICED US  
NIGHT THE SPIRIT  
OF BALLY WILL  
ARISE ONCE  
MORE!

SIX GENERATIONS  
MY FAMILY HAS LIVED  
TO DO THIS DEED!



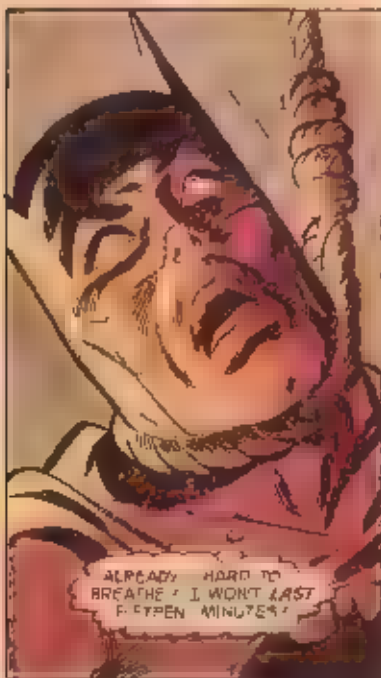
AND MISS  
PENNYWORTH  
FULFILLS YOUR  
"CONDITIONS"

YOU  
REALIZE  
YOU'RE  
MADE!

NOT AT ALL! MY  
ANCESTOR ACTUALLY  
SUCCEEDED IN LIBERATING  
THE DEMON!

HE SPOKE OF  
THE MAIDEN  
THEN SLAIN STILL  
WALKS THESE  
VERY HALLS.

AND NOW  
FAREWELL!




ALREADY HARD TO  
BREATHE! I WON'T LAST  
FIFTY MINUTES!




TOE'S BARELY  
TOUCHING  
THE PLATFORM  
BUT THERE'S A  
CHANCE A  
SLIM ONE.


THAT TORCH!  
IF I CAN TENSE MY  
NECK MUSCLES...  
KEEP FROM  
FRANGLING.



START MYSELF  
SWINGING  
FORWARD




NOW  
BACKWARD




TO GATHER  
ENOUGH  
MOMENTUM

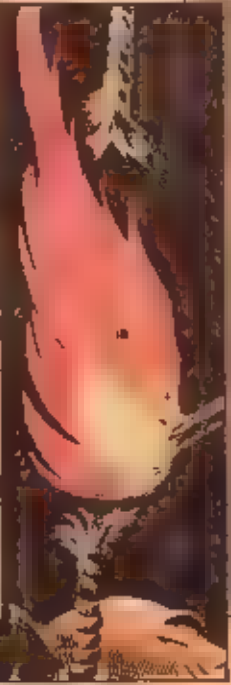
TO REACH



MADE IT!  
NOW TO TWIST  
AROUND

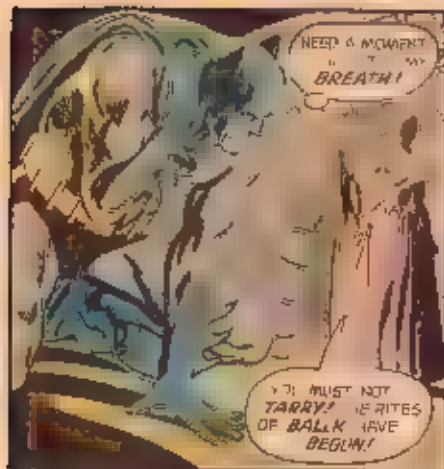


LET ME GET MY  
HANDS LOOSE



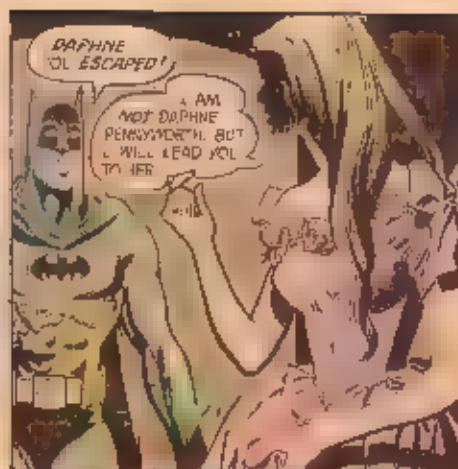
BURNS LIKE THE  
DEATH BUT BETTER  
BURNS IN  
DEATH!





NEED A MOMENT  
TO  
BREATHE!

I MUST NOT  
TARRY! THE RITES  
OF BALK HAVE  
BEGIN!



DAPHNE  
HAS ESCAPED!

I AM  
NOT DAPHNE  
PENNYWORTH. BUT  
I WILL LEAD YOU  
TO HER



HER VOICE  
IS SO  
HOLLOW  
LIKE AN  
ECHO!

THE COVEN HOLDS  
UNUSUAL CEREMONIES  
IN THE OLD CHAPEL. IT'S  
WAY HURRY!



OH, HER TOUCH  
IS AS A WHISPER  
BUT FIRM!

HIS HEAR-  
INGINGS MUST  
HAVE DONE  
THINGS TO  
MY MIND.

BE QUIET  
DON'T LET ANYONE  
KNOW HER NAME  
AND YOU'LL  
BE FIGHTING  
WITH AN OVER-  
WHELMING  
FEELING OF  
LOVE!



THERE IS NO  
CHURCH THE COVEN  
HIDES IN THE  
AT ALL  
NO FURTHER

YOUR'S IS A  
HOLY MISSION  
OR THE COVEN  
IS A PART OF IT.

GO!



INSIDE THE COVEN BEGINS A DANCE OF DARKEST MAGIC AND DEFILES THE FORTHY WIT TO WANT

NIGHTLY A DEMON  
KEEPS THE CITY  
SLEEPING







HEAR US, O  
BA..K INTO  
YOL I GIVE THIS  
MAIDEN THAT  
ONCE MORE  
YOL MAY STAND  
AMONGST US

THERE COMES A COLD GUST OF WIND, AND A  
FETID ODOR OF DECAY SWEPS OVER THE  
REVELATION. THE DOLPHIN DUM TO A FAINT BLOW  
AND FLY A CHILL INSTANT BLACKNESS. AMES ALL



A WAVERING  
FIGURE SEEMS  
O SWELL  
FROM THE  
DARK AND  
HE DOOR  
BECOMES  
A CHOKING  
SPENCH



THEN THE FLAMES  
SPUR TO FULL  
BRI..TNESS AGAIN  
AND

HE CEREMONY'S  
OVER & OFF. YOUR  
BALK WILL REMAIN  
A WHATEVER HELL  
SPAWNED HIM.



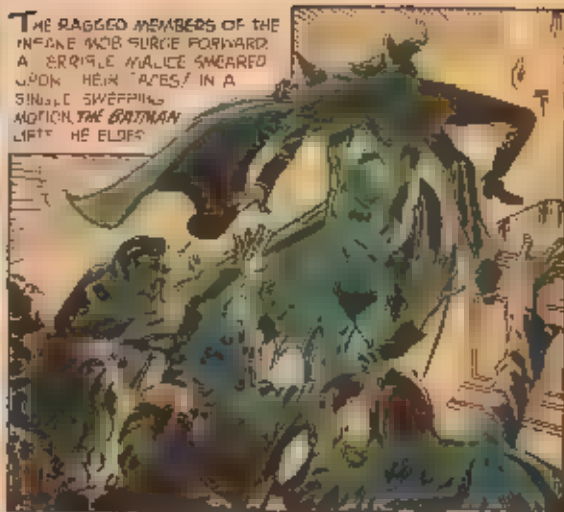
NO!  
THE  
DEMON  
MUST BE  
SERVED



LET US  
PITY WORK  
DOWN!

SERVANTS  
OF BALK  
AID  
ME!

THE RAGGED MEMBERS OF THE  
INFAME MOB SURGE FORWARD.  
A BRIGADE MALICE SWEARED  
UPON THEIR FAITHS, IN A  
SINGLE SWEEPING  
MOTION, THE BATMAN  
LIFT HE EYES



AND FLINGS  
HIM



DEMORALIZED FEARING FOR THEIR LIVES  
HE COVEN RO MENTE AND LIVES

DON'T  
EAVE ME

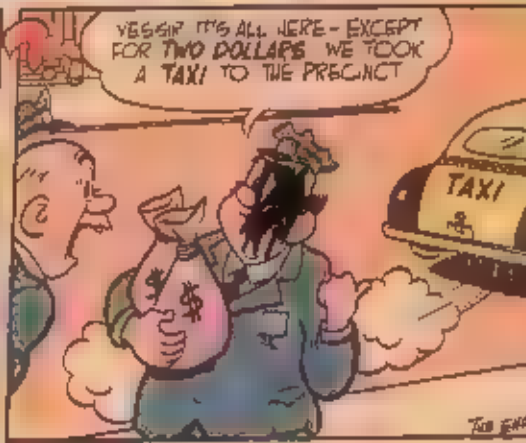
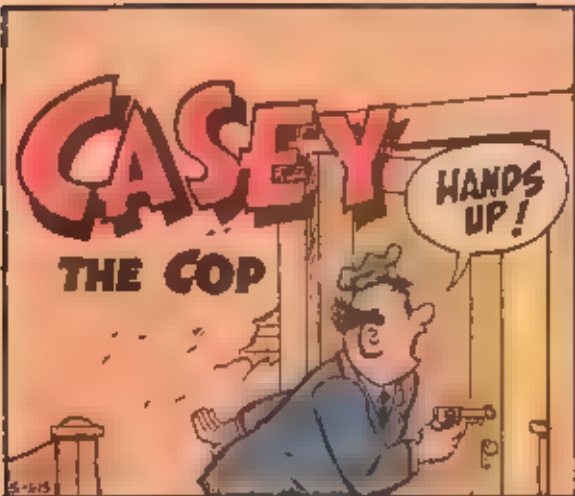


I AM  
ALONE  
DESERTED  
BY ALL

AND YOU, BALK  
HAVE YOU ALSO  
DESERTED ME?

THEN  
I DIE







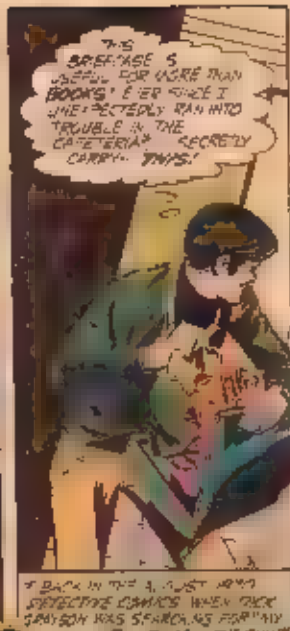




WHAT'S THE RUSH?

A HEAVY CALL FROM A FRIEND OF MINE NEEDS PERSONAL ATTENTION.

IT ALL WROTE IT UP IN OUR LOG BOOK AFTER.



THE BREAKFAST IS USEFUL FOR US MORE THAN BOOKS. I'VE EVER SINCE I UNEXPECTEDLY RAN INTO TROUBLE IN THE CAFETERIA. SECRETLY CARRY THIS!

I BACK IN THE A. JUST NOW DETECTIVE CAMPS WHEN THEY GRAYSON WAS SEARCHING FOR MY NAME. THE SUN!



THE CALLER SOUNDED DIS-ORIENTED, ALMOST INCOHERENT, BUT HE SAID ENOUGH TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF AS PHIL REAL, FROM "THE STURDY CAMPAIGN."



SCRIPT BY MIKE FRIEDRICH

ART BY NOVIK & MIKE ESPOSITO  
EDITOR: F. S. M. ARTS

LUCKY IS HUNTER UNIVERSITY FOR WHEN FEL IS IN ACTION IS NEEDED IN EMERGENCES THERE IS THE VOLUNTEER SERVICE OF.

# Robin




RAVING TO RUN UP HIS CYLE

THE SPARK IS OVER THERE BY THE GOTHAM RIVER WAIT

WHAT'S HE DOING ON THAT EDGE?

HE'S TOTTERING.



FALLING...!  
WE'LL HIT THOSE  
ROCKS BELOW--  
UNLESS I..



CONTACT!



SEE THIS WATER'S  
COLD

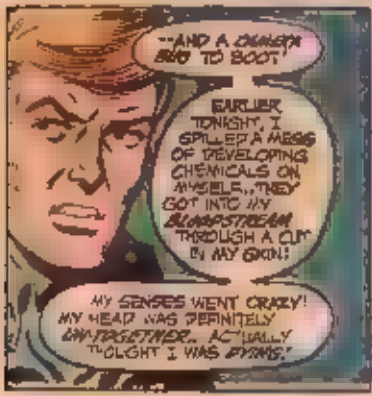


SLOW  
MINUTES  
PASS,  
UNTIL..

YORK GOT ONLY  
FREEZING, BUT  
FALLING TOO!  
LOOK AT ALL THIS  
CRAP ON MY  
UNIFORM

THANK'S, ROBIN!  
DID I NEARLY GO  
OFF THE DEEP END!


I'D BETTER  
EXPLAIN TO FORTUNITY  
PHOTOGRAPHER FOR PRIME  
"BLACK" STAR'S  
CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN-



--AND A QUINCY  
BUD TO BOOT!

EARLIER  
TONIGHT, I  
SPILLED A MESS  
OF DEVELOPING  
CHEMICALS ON  
MYSELF.. THEY  
GOT INTO MY  
BLOODSTREAM  
THROUGH A CUT  
IN MY SKIN!

MY SENSES WENT CRAZY!  
MY HEAD WAS DEFINITELY  
UNTOGETHER.. ACTUALLY  
THOUGHT I WAS DYING!



A MAN NAMED DICK  
GRAYSON TOLD ME  
ABOUT A WAY TO  
CALL WHEN IN TROUBLE  
BUT I'M LUCKY YOU  
HAPPENED TO BE  
AROUND, ROBIN!

WHY WERE  
YOU OUT  
HERE?

DUNNO, GUESS  
MY MIND WAS  
CONCENTRATING  
ON MY JOB!

"BLACK" STAR'S BIG ISSUE IS NOW  
CONGRESSMAN FORT'S CAMPAIGN THE  
POLITICS OF GOTHAM CITY BY  
THE LOCAL I.C.M. PLANT

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING



NEXT NIGHT, DICK MARCH BLUES TO TOWN...

TODAY'S THE BIG DEBATE BETWEEN PRO STUART AND REP FORTÉ

A LOT OF COLLEGE KIDS ARE BACKING STUART. LOOK US FOR A NEW ANSWER TO THEIR PROBLEMS

TODAY WE'LL SEE WHERE THE GENERAL PUBLIC STANDS!

THROUGH MARCHMAN, MY OPPONENT, MR FORTÉ HAS ALLOWED ICM TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

ON THE CONTRARY, MR STUART, I STAND PROUDLY BY RECORD IT WAS THROUGH MY INFLUENCE THAT ICM CAME TO THIS AREA DOUBLING THE NUMBER OF AVAILABLE JOBS

WHEN I WAS A KID, I COULD SWIM IN BOTHAM RIVER—NOW IT'S A HEALTH HAZARD

I SAY THAT WITH AN AWARE PUBLIC AND STRINGENT CONTROLS WE CAN HAVE JOBS AND CLEAN WATER

ACTION AND VIGILANCE ARE NEEDED I'M THE ONE TO DO IT

THE AREA LOST SENSE OF PURPOSE HE COULD REUSE 50,000 OF HIS WOODPINE TREES

UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, POLITICS -- AND THE AMERICAN DESIRE FOR MAKING GOOD IN THE EYES OF ONE'S SUPERIORS -- IS RAMPANT WITHIN THE ICM CORPORATION! WITNESS...

THE BOARD CHAIRMAN

THE POLITICAL ACTION KIDS ARE CONVINCING THE PEOPLE TO SUPPORT STUART! THAT MEANS OUR OPERATING COSTS I DON'T APPROVE

THE VICE PRESIDENT

HE OPPOSES IT LIKE THE WAY THE COLLEGE KIDS ARE ACTING UP

HE WANTS SOMETHING DONE ABOUT IT AGAIN

THE SUPERVISOR

I HAVE ORDERS TO SOULASH THE KIDS CAMPAIGN

YOU HANDLE IT!







IT'S OUR CAMPUS DO-GOODER! GUT 'IM!

SCOPES' WRONGS CONCLUSION! THESE TWO AREN'T HELPING THEY STARTED THIS!

THE FIRES SPREADING-- GOT TO NAB THESE GUYS FAST!



COUGH!! COUGH!! SMOKE-- HARD TO SEE!

HIS COAT-- SO THICK-- MY PUNCH DIDN'T HAVE MUCH EFFECT...



RRRIP

SO-- STRIP ONE COAT--



ZAP



LONG AS YOU'RE SO INTERESTED IN THAT FREAKING PROF... HERE-- TAKE A HARD LOOK AT HIS PICTURES!

SNEAKED UP ON ME-- UNDER COVER OF SMOKE...

ZUK



GETTING AWAY-- LEAVING ME WITH A SORE HEAD AND A PILE OF PHOTOGRAPHS!

BETTER TRY TO HOLD THIS FIRE DOWN TILL THE FIREMEN COME!

BUT THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE--ALL CAMPUS LITERATURE AND EQUIPMENT ARE DESTROYED! WHEN THE WORKERS RETURN...

OKAY, FELLAS, I'LL LEVEL WITH YOU! WE'RE OUT OF MONEY AND CAN'T REPLACE ANYTHING!

THAT MEANS WE'VE GOT TO WORK ~~FASTER~~ AS HARD! WE'VE GOT A MOVEMENT GOING HERE AND NO FIRE CAN STOP IT!



THIS HAS BEEN THE YEAR OF THE INVOLVED COLLEGE STUDENT...

...THE YEAR HE'S REALIZED THAT HE DOES HAVE INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY...



...THE YEAR OF NEW LIFE, NEW IDEAS, SOMETHING TO SAY



AND THOUGH THE TOWNSPeOPLE OF NEW CARTHAGE TEND TO DISTRUST THE UNIVERSITY, THEY STOP...



...AND THEY LISTEN...



UNTIL...

DUCK! THIS PAPER--IT'S ANFULE!

MUN-- WHAT'S HAPPENED?



A PICTURE OF PROFESSOR STUART PAYING SCOME GUYS TO POLLUTE THE RIVER--AND HELP HIS CAMPAIGN--ISSUE AGAINST REPRESENTATIVE FORTE!

WITH THE ELECTION JUST A FEW DAYS OFF, THIS IS GONNA HURT!

STUART PAYS TO POLLUTE RIVER

IT'S A SHEAR!



NEW CARTHAGE TRIBUNE

FORTE OVERTAKES STUART IN POLL!  
RUNAWAY VICTORY FORECAST!

ALLEGED PAYOFF HURTS FORTE CAMPAIGN

IS THIS REALLY THE END...?  
BE HERE NEXT ISSUE FOR TEMPERATURE BOILING--AND RISING!





# LETTERS to the BATMAN

Dear Editor:

In a carton, under a suitcase, carefully wrapped in a plastic bag, is *Detective Comics* No. 139. This semi-olde, from 1948, contained a story, "The Crimes in Jade," dealing with jade smugglers, Chinese-Americans, and a murder. I look back and picture Bill Finger researching the story, uncovering facts to be slipped into the story-line as extraneous preface. The scene was Gotham City's Chinatown, and the cover pictured a killer, armed with a Samurai sword, perched on a huge statue, and, in line with the publishing glomph of sensationalism, about to cut a sharp portion out of *Batman*.

That was 1948, near the end of what just about everyone calls *Batman's Golden Age*.

This, however, is 1970, and a second magazine beside me is *Batman* No. 224. The cover shows a huge bath (sorry) about to dump *Batman* into a huge paddlewheel! Sensational, glaring, gaudy. The similarity between the two issues doesn't end there, though.

A jazz musician, an old, downbeat, blind Negro walks on a street in New Orleans, greets and is greeted by a policeman, and is then yanked into an alley, and beaten to death. The muggers, silhouetted against the lights of a city, search for some unknown object and not finding it, melt away into the lanky blackness.

It's all there. The melodrama, the melancholy, the untouchable air of that 1948 story. There's a murder mystery which turns out not to be a murder mystery, gobs of action, an unusual setting, and a tightly woven plot. There, the similarity ends, because this is 1970, and not

1948, and the writer is Denny O'Neil and not Bill Finger. And because of these differences, "Carnival of the Cursed" was, in this reader's opinion, a classic, and not a sales-minded try at all the gimmicks of the early *Batman*. There's a "human" *Batman* who reads a headline in an unnamed tabloid, rips and crumples it in disgust, and tosses it on the floor for all (readers) to see. It's an account of a musician's death, and it sends *Batman* off to New Orleans to track down the killer.

Although the story was dotted with such "clever" quips as "Vermin—crawl back into your hole!" and "'Cause I coulda sworn I just seen a giant bat!", it was excellent. Fry Novick's pencils were fine and Giordano's inks blended in better than in past issues.

But the script deserves more comment than the art, I feel. Denny O'Neil is improving. He put a note of subtlety in the story and carried through with a smooth flow of action that almost never seemed to stop. Moreover, he centered the story around a society that many of us know little or nothing about. The old jazz musicians seemed larger-than-life, integrated, and terribly, terribly real. This issue was close to flawless, and certainly the best since the "Big Change."

CLEM ROBINS, Sheffield, Mass.

(The "beat" (New Orleans style) goes on with harmonious praise from reader after reader—proving that this issue can't be beat)—Editor)

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Dear Editor:

I've just spent about twenty minutes searching through my thesaurus . . . no luck. The new *Batman* is beyond description. "Carnival of the Cursed" was, as usual, an excellent example of this. I don't think a story has ever been written focusing on jazz and this was a more than welcome treat. How can I only realize how much fans adore *Batman* now that "The Big Change" is in effect? It is not just the superb plots, the magnificent artwork; it is that now, **BATMAN HAS SOUL!** *Batman* is a human being now; the fact that he seems like a god now makes no difference! We readers can relate to *The Batman* now (we love the use of the word "The" in his name); he is . . . fantastic!

Examples in the story itself include the second page: does not *Batman* have emotions too? Pages nine and ten, which bring back *The Batman* as the cowering creature of the night he was always meant to be. Pages fifteen and sixteen . . . *Batman*: the death-cheer! The final page: things do not necessarily have to have a happy ending in *Batman* anymore.

And the letters are more intellectual now (with some exceptions, like this one), so that *Batman* is becoming like the works of Shakespeare . . . there is so much to comment on that you must search for.

—JEFF RISTINE, Ann Arbor, Mich.

(To our personal knowledge, "Carnival of the Cursed" was not the first comic story to feature jazz as an essential element. That honor goes to "King of New Orleans," originally published in the Dec. 1962 *Strange Adventures*—and currently (and coincidentally) reprinted in the Dec. 1970 *Strange Adventures*—Editor)



Dear Editor:

Unfortunately, it seems the best method of obtaining a "regular" slush in your better columns is to become hypercritical and downright stubborn. It's also (you bid (?) that I just can't bring myself to become unjust to what must be recognized as comics' best character. . . . *The Batman*. The August #224 issue is another bit of convincing proof to add to that claim.

Dennis O'Neill has conceived yet another macabre tale and Irv Novick surpassed his own outstanding talent in producing a mysterious novel for which the *Bat-Man* has been clamoring! The human touches which were incorporated . . . the dialect, the old jazz funeral, the carnival, the sternwheeler . . . made the eerie setting that much more realistic. Dennis's characterization was also superb, as he fashioned living personalities of the main people involved. The murder and all further events were linked expertly together and the solemn ending was exquisite!

Meanwhile, Irv Novick turned in his finest performance to date. Neal Adams might be everyone else's "man for *Batman*" (he is one of my all-time favorites) but Novick ranks right alongside him, in my opinion. He depicted New Orleans with accomplished verve and his rendering of *Batman* was at its emotion-filled, awe-inspiring best. Not to mention Dick Giordano, who really brings out the boldness in Irv's pencils.

MIKE DISTANCE, *Huffman Estate, Ill.*  
[We know you've been waiting for the usual sour note as here it comes—loud and clear. . . . Fallin']

Dear Editor:

Despite a good plot and good art, "Carnival of the Cursed" was, like most of the new-new look *Batman* stories that preceded it, only fair. It would have been exciting, if not for the following flaws:

(1) The "campy" death-trap that *Batman* was put in. Can you give me one good reason why Moloch didn't just simply shoot *Batman* on page 14, panel 5, and then toss him in the river to eliminate the evidence, instead of tying him to the sternwheel and leaving the scene of the crime so that anybody might find the body? Can you give me one bad reason? Surely such a ridiculously unbelievable situation is telltale of my O'Neill's writing ability, and your own editor's acceptance.

(2) Now that you've got our hero in this mess, the least you could do is rescue him in a realistic manner, but no, his escape was contrived. Suppose that loose cable hadn't been there? Suppose *Batman* hadn't been able to catch it in his teeth? Suppose he hadn't been able to throw it in the axle? Suppose it hadn't wrapped itself around the axle? Suppose it hadn't tightened that way, instead of slipping off? *Batman* was pretty darned lucky!

(3) This is not such an obvious, nor as important a defect in the story as the first two, but it was present, nonetheless. There are three sides in *The Batman*: Bruce Wayne, the human being; the awesome night-creature; and the joyless-detective. O'Neill shows us a little of the first (*Batman* avenging "Blind Buddy's" murder because he is an old fan was a good, human touch), concentrates mainly on the second, but almost totally ignores the third, making *The Batman* seem like a brainless muscle-man who relies solely on brawn and a scare-reputation to catch criminals. I am thinking specifically of the fact that this ingenious super-sleuth never realized that Moloch and Rufus March were the same person, although I was obvious to me from the beginning.

PAUL DUNSHIND, Fairfax, Cal.

been a traditional highlight of *Batman* stories. [And who is to psychoanalyze a murderer's motives for the manner he chooses to dispose of his victim?] 22: Yeah, *Batman* was darned lucky, all right. 23: Not every story cat— or even should—show the three sides of *Batman*. YOU realized Moloch and March were the same because the story was presented in-stage that way to YOU . . . but not to the off-stage BATMAN!—Editor]

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Dear Editor:

To readers of some of your more recent publications, it has been immediately apparent that Bruce Wayne in cape and cowl is a very lightning figure. Tall, lean, and so forbidding as a giant bat, the mysterious gentleman makes sudden, ideal appearances and has taken to posturing his gaunt frame quite dramatically—shaded in inky darkness, long cape swirling, framed by a few appropriately sombre tree-branches and spotlighted by a full moon just over one shoulder. I am not speaking sarcastically—certainly would be a closer approximation of my emotions. At long last, MOOD has returned to the *Batman* strip, thanks to the artistry of Irv Novick and Dick Giordano.

The reason these men have succeeded where so many artist-inker teams have failed is largely due to Irv and Dick's appreciation of an important rule that universally applies to the art of all comic mags—don't let the art crowd out the story. The mag's main character, they must be sure, is in between the style of art and the main character's physical appearance. Sounds simple, right? Surprisingly, this basic yet vital commodity is lacking in many of today's strips, leaving an empty "wooden" effect and detracting from the unity of the mag as a whole.

In the case of *The Batman*, the key to the strip's mood can be summed up by the words GALT and DARK. The Galt Look is achieved by use of long, sweeping brush-strokes and an emphasis on vertically-oriented lines and panel shapes. Examples are liberally sprinkled throughout #224's "Carnival of the Cursed"—page 2, panel 1; page 8, panels 1-3; page 13, panel 2; page 20, panel 1. Dark, dark inks and sharp contrast between colors add to the mood by pointing up the severity of both character and situation, while retaining enough mystery the mystery which is so much a part of *The Batman* of today.

To change the subject, I agree with every word of saying that the letter-column in *Batman* is in desperate need of a new title. The suggested *Batheads* seems to fit the bill—and the present one, too.

STEVE BEERY, *Alma, Ark.*

[Other suggestions for new titles to this department have been: Bring it to The Batman; Calling The Batman; Via Batman; Batman's Batmail; Speaking to Batman; The Bat-Room; Batmail; Mail. But the overwhelming choice was for Letters in The Batman. Indeed, after all our correspondence—Anthony Kowalik, 1541 Union Avenue, Harvey, Illinois 60426, not only suggested this name but drew a pencil-sketch to go along with it. This sketch has been inked by Neal Adams and now appears in this department. Our thanks to Mr. Kowalik . . . and an original *Batman* manuscript is being presented as here to our award!—Editor]

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Address communications to LETTERS TO THE BATMAN, National Periodical Publications, 900 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

[2] The death-trap—“campy” or straight—but always